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**LAS VEGAS TRUCKER PLEADS GUILTY TO
USING THE INTERNET, TELEPHONES, AND INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS
TO OBTAIN SEX WITH A MINOR GIRL IN SOUTH LAKE TAHOE**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that RAYMOND BENJAMIN PEDROZA, 51, of Las Vegas, Nevada pled guilty today before United States District Judge Garland E. Burrell, Jr. to attempting to commit lewd acts with a minor female via means of interstate commerce.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, and the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office. This successful prosecution of PEDROZA is part of "Operation Valley Predator," a multi-agency operation spearheaded by the Sacramento Office of the FBI and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California as part of Project Safe Childhood, a national initiative of the U.S. Department of Justice designed to increase federal and state prosecutions of violent sexual predators of children. As a part of Project Safe Childhood, the United States Attorney's Office teamed with state and local agencies throughout the Eastern District to enhance law enforcement presence on the internet, and to educate the public and children regarding safe internet use. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to www.projectsafechildhood.gov, or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, PEDROZA used the Internet (YAHOO and MySpace) to entice an individual he believed was a 13 year-old South Lake Tahoe girl to engage in lewd sexual acts. PEDROZA then traveled from Las Vegas to South Lake Tahoe for the purpose of committing illicit sexual activity with her. For his intended sexual encounter, Pedroza rented a motel room and purchased condoms and candy. Pedroza also brought a laptop computer, camera, and Viagra with him from Las Vegas. Pedroza planned to provide the minor a prepaid cellular phone so that, after the sexual encounter, the minor and he could have future telephonic contacts.

PEDROZA will receive a sentence of at least five years imprisonment. PEDROZA also faces a life term of federal supervision, life registration as a sex offender, a fine of up to \$250,000, and restitution. PEDROZA is scheduled to be sentenced on August 10, 2007.

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